

Dressforms

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Summary: The Crystal Gems attempting to blend in over a few thousand years. Part of the Breaking Down Universe, for all other parts click my username.

Dressforms

**\*\*Dressforms\*\***

To celebrate my birthday, I'm going to indulge in a little bit of the kind of twaddle I enjoy: clothing styles throughout history!

Normal service will resume soon.

PS: I apologize for this being quite Eurocentric, that's my specialist subject, I am woefully ignorant about history on other continents and trying to catch up.

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**\_\*\*Pre-History\*\*\_**

When it becomes clear that the bipedal creatures wandering around in small clutches are going to be the dominant race on Earth (it was a toss-up between them and the tentacled creatures of the ocean, but the bipeds won out), Rose suggests that they should isolate themselves so as not to interfere with their natural development.

She can't help herself sometimes, though. She doesn't like to see them go hungry or cold, and the severe climate shock nearly wipes them out followed by a long lean drought. When she sees them again, they are wearing the skins of the animals they hunt and in time they learn to weave cloth. She knows they'll be fine without her.

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**\_\*\*Ancient Rome\*\*\_**

Rose chooses to meet Augustus alone. He is a dangerous man with dangerous ambitions, she is told, and she's heartily sick of watching Roman soldiers march across territories they have no business being in. The Gauls keep a respectful distance, and she prefers it that way.

The stola is manifested in layers of fine gauzy stuff that the Romans have no way of producing themselves, held together with gold threads, pink upon white upon pink. She leaves her hair loose, and doesn't manifest sandals as a good Roman woman might have. She is not a good Roman woman, and this must be made clear.

He pales dramatically when he sees her, the rumoured Goddess of the Gauls made flesh. She towers above him, fluttering and feminine as she is, and leaves a sizeable dent in the goblet of wine he gives her to display her strength.

He offers her riches, advantageous marriages and even land. She replies that the land is not his to give. Abashed, he assures her that his men will never cross her path again.

He is a man of his word, if nothing else. She dons the stola just twice more to meet with his successors, Claudius Caesar and Vespasian Caesar. They are decent men, but she is heartily sick of Rome and the stola never really suited her anyway.

Later, she asks Pearl to manifest a stola, and it looks so much better on her that she wondered if she should have sent Pearl instead.

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**\_\*\*Tribal Africa\*\*\_**

Regrettably, they spend very little time on the African continent because the many different tribes hold people of such variety that they can never predict whether they'll be greeted as representatives of their gods or condemned as witches and chased away.

It's a shame, because Rose loves their music and their stories, and the beautiful objects they create and insist she take with her for 'protection.' This is Garnet's preferred continent, they see her as a particularly large and beautiful woman who must belong to their tribe. Little squabbles break out between the tribes, to some it's clear that Garnet has Bambara blood and to others she's obviously Ngombe. Her third eye doesn't even phase them.

What Rose especially enjoys about them is their lax attitude to clothing. In such hot regions nudity is normal, not just for the young with their beautiful smooth skins but for fat little infants and stooping elders. They decorate their skins with ocher and pigmented oils and shave intricate patterns into their hair. When they do feel the need to wear clothing, a band of fabric tied around the waist usually suffices, sometimes a woven cloak of plant fibres.

The ritual scars, however, is something Rose cannot understand. Still rich with the memories of having patches scorched onto her gem, the idea of permanently altering her form in this fashion is ironically alien to her.

They flee the African continent for the best part of three hundred years after a misplaced tear of Rose's falls on a Mamprusi warrior and clears away all of the scars he has earned in his lifetime. The entire tribe chases them across the forest, and unwilling to fight them, Rose has to settle for blocking their way by throwing a boulder in their path.

She is very amused to find that the incident makes its way into folktales eventually, though she is referred to as an angry elephant spirit with a grudge against the Mamprusi.

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\_\*\*Heian Era Japan\*\*\_

On the rare visits to Japan, they are welcomed by the Fujiwara clan. As in Africa, they are taken for animal spirits and given every privilege in the hopes that they will bestow good fortune on the clan. The Fujiwara hardly need it; they are already incredibly powerful, but it's best to let them keep their illusions. Rose has the sakura trees blossom in greater volume than has ever been seen before, and they are suitably impressed.

This is not a favoured place of Rose's, purely because of the dress she has to don in order to be respectful. The many layers of the junihitoe weigh heavily on her, and although the fabrics are ornate and incredibly beautiful, it reminds her of how high caste gems on Homeworld used layered apparel to show off how wealthy they were.

Using the fan to speak irritates her, using the screen even more so. Garnet has never set foot in Japan after hearing what was expected of her, and Amethyst only lasted half a day before she threw off her junihitoe and beamed back to their homebase.

Pearl, however, loves this place. She is a natural with the fan, and seems to actively enjoy hiding behind the screen. As much as she seemed to dislike the layered dress Rose had once had her wear on Homeworld, the multi-faceted symbolism of the layers of the junihitoe seem to strike a chord in her. Perhaps it's because they don't have to move much, and most movements are carefully controlled and graceful, purposeful. The court ladies take her for a crane spirit, and it becomes a minor fashion to wear a small silvered mirror on one's brow in the absence of an actual pearl.

Rose is happy to send her back on solo excursions; it's rare enough that Pearl wants to go anywhere alone, let alone more than once. On one of these trips she meets a young woman who would later come to be known as Murasaki no Shikibu (Pearl knows and remembers her true name, but has always chosen for her own reasons to keep it to herself.) She makes ever more frequent visits while Murasaki writes her poems and during the decade-long completion of her famous novel.

In 1014, Murasaki no Shikibu dies, and Pearl will not return to Japan for over 500 years. In the space of her gem, unseen by even Rose, there is a scroll with a poem written for her by her dear friend.

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### \_\*\*Twelfth Century Europe\*\*\_

They are different countries, but not that different. France, Italy, England, Spain... the languages are fascinating in how they vary from place to place. Christianity has spread like a weed, sprouting churches and cathedrals all over the lands.

The covering of women's hair is irritating, but Rose enjoys the interesting architecture of the headpieces they wear to cover said hair. The bbliauts with their dramatic sleeves and ornate embroidery are fun to wear, they are loose-fitting and pleasantly draped.

Oddly, it is Amethyst who prefers these places. She enjoys the chaos, Rose thinks, and wearing her hair long and loose is accepted because she is taken either for a child or a dwarf. Dwarves are coveted for their novelty, and Rose has to tell many a monarch that Amethyst is not for sale.

They do not travel much during this time. Their homebase is on an isolated coast, and Rose has learned that the humans are just as adept at picking fights with each other as gems have been, and it's best to let them get on with it for a while. She does step in from time to time when one country looks to be at a severe disadvantage, and this prompts a lot of conquer-hungry monarchs to back off.

She gives her bbliauts to Amethyst to do with what she will. Amethyst eats them.

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### \_\*\*Tudor England\*\*\_

Her first instinct when she sees the stiff gowns, the stomachers and the overlaid sleeves and the high arching ruffs, is to think of those curious little lizards that unfurl a frill to make themselves appear larger and more threatening to an attacker. She looks at Elizabeth, Queen of England, and sees a scared young woman trying to make herself appear larger than life.

Rose wears the gowns and the stomachers but forgoes the ruff and the partlet. She is well-known in England now, and has earned this privilege. Pearl is more nervous about not fulfilling courtly protocol, and even wears a coif though she doesn't have to.

The precious stones that the wealthy dot on every corner of their clothes they can fit is vulgar to Rose's eyes. When Elizabeth passes and the throne is passed on to James, formerly of Scotland, they leave England and intend to stay away for as long as possible. Rose tosses her confining stomacher gown out of the window on her way out.

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\*\*Seventeenth Century Sweden\*\*

They have spent many years away from Europe, but when news reaches Rose's ear of the scandalous behaviour of a young queen, she knows she has to pay Sweden a visit. She dons a layered but light gown, secured with stays and with sleeves almost as wide as her head, and then feels very foolish when she is introduced to Queen Christina.

Christina is dashing in a loose-fitting man's shirt and breeches cut to display her shapely legs, with a brocaded frock coat thrown over to keep it at least a little respectable. On their second meeting, Rose tosses the gown and manifests her own 'mens' outfit. Christina is delighted, now there are two scandalous women at court.

Christina's rumoured mistress, Ebba Sparre, hovers nearby at all times. She is a wispy little scrap of a thing, all big eyes and tiny birdlike bones, swimming in her voluminous silks. Rose cannot help but be reminded of Pearl and in that moment miss her, as she had declined to make the journey with Rose.

Christina insists that they be painted together in a portrait, and they both don a military jacket of brocaded scarlet trimmed with white fur. It is one of a few portraits that exist of Rose Quartz, and after the Crystal Gems resume their isolation scholars will write many pages on the mysterious pink-haired woman, who she was and where she came from.

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